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Agenda item 8
Adoption of the report of the Committee on its forty-sixth session

Draft report

Rapporteur: Mr. Valery **Zhdanovich** (Belarus)

Addendum

Programme questions: evaluation (item 3 (d))

Report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives

1. At its 2nd meeting, on 14 August 2006, the Committee considered the note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on strengthening the role of evaluation and the application of evaluation findings on programme design, delivery and policy directives (A/61/83 and Corr.1).

2. The representative of OIOS introduced the report and responded to the questions raised during the Committee's consideration of the report.

Discussion

3. The view was expressed that evaluation was a critically important function and that the report was a helpful and informative account of the frequency and quality of evaluation practice. The report indicated with concern how evaluation was functioning across the Secretariat. It was noted with regret that evaluation seemed to be of low priority and that so few staff members were working in that area. There appeared to be many internal needs in that regard, particularly in terms of training staff in evaluation techniques in order to enhance the overall quality of the evaluations within the Secretariat. Furthermore, there appeared to be serious gaps

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within the Secretariat in that area, including an absence of clarity surrounding leadership, insufficient capacity, and a need to improve internal structures for evaluation.

4. Delegations noted that improving the practice of self-evaluation was crucial and required commitment from senior managers, and agreement was expressed with the measures outlined in the report in that regard. It was noted that there was a need to ensure that programme managers take responsibility for self-evaluation, and that this approach would encourage greater accountability by having managers themselves explain their findings and respond to Member States' questions and feedback. Managers should therefore absorb and adapt best practices for self-evaluation so that they had the tools to improve their programmes. It was viewed as important that evaluation recommendations be directly linked to the next stage of the planning cycle and the adoption of the budget. The needs assessment exercise described in paragraph 29 of the report was seen as an important first step in improving the current evaluation practice in the Secretariat. The objective of the exercise was to help each of the programmes determine the type of evaluation that was best suited to its work, assess current capacity and gaps, then feed that information into evaluation planning and budgeting.

5. Questions were raised about the type of evaluation training for staff currently undertaken by OIOS. It was explained that in the light of staff constraints, OIOS had not been able to conduct any training in recent years, indicating a notable gap. OIOS explained its current strategy for filling that gap: development of a training module on evaluation to be incorporated into existing training being conducted by the Office of Human Resources Management and other parts of the Secretariat. The module was slated to be piloted in the regional commissions towards the end of 2006 or early in 2007.

6. Clarification was requested on the actions being taken to follow up on the implementation of evaluation recommendations. The OIOS representative described the existing system by which progress on the implementation of recommendations was assessed. The process is based on a consultative process with the programmes in question six months after the OIOS report findings are disseminated. In addition, the triennial review process has led to a more systematic evaluation and assessment of the type of changes and impact of the evaluation recommendations.

7. Questions on the mandate and nature of the report were raised by delegations. It was observed that the current report contained information about process and the quality of evaluation efforts throughout the Secretariat. What would be more useful, however, would be objective assessment by OIOS of the impact of those evaluation efforts, in order to show what improvements and changes had been effected. There was a need to deliberate on and revisit the value added of the report. In addition, it was noted that OIOS reports themselves were of mixed quality, and that OIOS itself should therefore look to improving its own reports as some OIOS reports were academic and not very practical.

8. With respect to topics for future evaluation (paras. 33-37), one delegation indicated that it would reserve its position on the subject until a later stage of the Committee's deliberations.

Conclusion and recommendations

9. **The Committee selected the following topics for in-depth evaluation, to be presented to the Committee for its consideration: in 2008, Department of Management — Office of Human Resources Management; and in 2009, United Nations support for the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States and Africa.**

10. **The Committee selected the following topics for thematic evaluation, to be presented to the Committee for its consideration: in 2008, Lessons learned: protocols and practices; and in 2009, United Nations coordinating bodies, to be undertaken in accordance with General Assembly resolutions 48/218 B of 29 July 1994, 54/244 of 23 December 1999 and 59/272 of 23 December 2004.**